

VZCZCXRO6879
OO RUEHGI RUEHMA RUEHROV
DE RUEHKH #0574 1051045
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 141045Z APR 08
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0555
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0158
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA

UNCLAS KHARTOUM 000574

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF/SPG, S/CRS, AF/SE WILLIAMSON
NSC FOR BPITTMAN AND CHUDSON
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KPKO](#) [SOCI](#) [AU](#) [UNSC](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: RARE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN GOS, SLA/ABDULWAHID AS FIGHTING
CONTINUES WITH JEM

REF: A) KHARTOUM 572

B) KHARTOUM 538

¶1. (SBU) In a departure from the unofficial ceasefire between the Sudanese Government and the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM)/Abdulwahid, three separate confrontations have erupted between their forces in recent days. The first two rebel attacks occurred in East Jebel Marra on April 9 and 11 and precipitated a government bombing near Golo (90km east of Zalingei) that killed four civilians and wounded two, according to the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS).

¶2. (SBU) On April 13, an insurgent force ambushed Sudanese security officers near Khourtalaba, South Darfur (30km from Kaas). The chief of military intelligence for Darfur, Col. Saeed Al Romyaziza, reported that at least 17 officers were killed in the bloody clash. In an April 13 meeting with CDA Fernandez, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Mutriff Siddiq attributed the attack to "Junud Mazloumeen" (Oppressed Soldiers), a former pro-GOS faction affiliated with SLA/Abdulwahid. Siddiq said that the perpetrators got away scot-free. Sudanese officials in Darfur left no doubt that the Government intended to retaliate for these rebel-initiated provocations.

¶3. (SBU) Fighting also continued between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the aggressive Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) rebel group in the northern part of West Darfur. JEM attacked a military base in Kushkush (between Kulbus and Geneina) late last week, killing several soldiers and wounding 31, according to Siddiq. He alleged that JEM used artillery in a two-pronged attack that included "their own Janjaweed," meaning fighters mounted on horseback and that overt Chadian support for JEM in the operation was obvious. While admitting that JEM operations throughout the "northern corridor" of West Darfur have led to the deaths of SAF soldiers, Al Romyaziza also asserted that many rebels have died.

¶4. (SBU) A JEM commander told Fieldoff on April 12 that the movement downed two Government helicopters in Jebel Moon on April 11, one of which resulted in considerable casualties. (Note: As of April 14, there have been no reports of downed aircraft anywhere in the Darfur region. End note.)

¶5. (SBU) Note: In addition to the violence in West Darfur, UNAMID officers have reported a surge in common crime in North Darfur, including the seizure of two UNAMID police cars and the slaying of an Omda (tribal leader) in the Abu Shouk IDP camp outside El Fasher. As a result, NGOs and UNDSS are reviewing their security measures. While UNAMID is anticipating reprisals on both sides, the Deputy Force Commander ordered no change in the force's posture during the April 14 morning briefing. Embassy Khartoum's EAC met April 13 to discuss the upsurge in fighting and security incidents in Darfur

(ref a). Since El Fasher and Nyala are stable with an even greater presence of uniformed SAF troops (due to the recent unpaid janjaweed demonstrations - ref b) the EAC decided to keep staff in place but will review the situation again as the situation warrants, including in anticipation of next week's controversial national census. End note.

16. (SBU) Comment: The SLA ambush of SAF forces is significant and will likely precipitate a disproportionate response on the part of the SAF, with additional bombings and attacks. This is unfortunate because until recently Jebel Mara has been a relative oasis of calm in comparison with the corridor north of El Geneina in West Darfur where the SAF released its fury against areas that had been occupied by JEM. Some observers have linked the recent upsurge in fighting in Darfur to the census, as rebel groups are unanimously against the census and want to ensure that their areas are too unstable for the census to occur.

FERNANDEZ